DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 030 970 EA 002 391

By-Stanavage, John A.

Man About School or How Can the Principal Be or Become an Instructional Leader?

Pub Date Feb 68

Note-16p.; Paper presented at the National Assn. of Secondary School Principals meeting (Atlantic City, N.J., Feb. 1968).

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.90

Descriptors-Administrative Organization, *Administrator Role, Change Agents, *Instructional Design, *Leadership Responsibility, Leadership Styles, *Principals, *Secondary Schools, Teacher Administrator Relationship

To perform effectively the role of instructional leader, the contemporary secondary school principal must reorganize his "principalship" by delegating to staff assistants responsibility for such managerial activities as student control, student activities, public relations, and plant operation. Following such a reorganization, the principal will find time for those activities more fundamental to the role of instructional leader, including classroom observation, staff committee sessions, individual conferences with teachers and students concerning the instructional program, attendance at educational curriculum meetings, and reading and writing. A staff organization which allows the principal to function as the instructional leader should be a primary goal for any principal who wishes to affect instruction and curriculum development in his school. (JH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

NASSP meeting, February 1968, Atlantic City, N.J.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

MAN ABOUT SCHOOL
or
HOW CAN THE PRINCIPAL BE OR BECOME AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER?

John A. Stanavage

A provocative title this, though I really prefer the working one I bestowed on it during its period of gestation. I dubbed it the Psychedelic Principal, or How To Drop Out (of the office) and Turn On (as a practicing educator), Where the Action Is (in the classroom). Well, hippie or square, it is an old theme to which we return, an old refrain and a lingering pain. There are few of us in our profession who in some rare moment of reposeful leisure--say about 2:00 a.m. some sultry July morning--have not wrestled with this dour incubus of a challenge. Instructional leader! It has been a role to be dreamed, but a desire to be despaired. The promise--the pretense?--has lodged like a choking bone in our conschience time and anon, as we have scurried about our schools, nudging pianos, placating wrothy parents, temporizing with testy teachers, ducking into the boys' john to nab unwary smokers, checking on the length of the micro-mini skirts--though not lecherously, mind you. Instructional leader? Our self-derision has been sardonic, but rueful.

As principals, we seem doomed forever to being the factotums, the Figaroes of the school. Someone has to fill the breach whether it be quashing the insubordination of some yeasty teenager or exhorting the teachers to discontinue their bridge game in time to take roll at the close of the period. Someone has to be the father-image whose shins are available for barking. Someone has to be Pinter's caretaker. That someone, of course, must be the principal who is the champion of chameleons, the man of a hundred disguises, the india-rubber administrator who is all things to all people.

Instructional leader! Not while you and I must waste our substance and dash our energies on the shoals of yesterday's problems, while tomorrow is standing outside the office door. Not while we must bend our will and flex our sinews just to get a five dollar expenditure authorized retroactively for a teacher. (And there's a task to stagger the resolution and to mascerate the courage of the stoutest principal.)

So you and I as principals try to fling back into the dusty attics of our minds all this nonsense about the importance of the instructional program and the leadership we putatively are exercising. We drearily go about our harried, appointed rounds, hair askew and arms akimbo. It is quite easy and safe to bury one's gnawing self-doubts beneath that towering mountain of details that overshadows us, in season and out. Only--when occasionally you arise too abruptly from your office chair in pursuit of some errant matter, a stinging twinge of wistful regret may twitch your memory. Only--when a chance article crosses your desk, an article grandly speaking to the purposes and purports of education and our schools, a fleeting vista of enticing possibilities may open before you for the second. Only--but then the phone jangles, with the superintendent urbanely wanting to know just what you are going to do about those students of yours who are parking in front of his house--seven blocks from the school. Forthwith you find yourself back in the cold-shower reality of the world as it is. (And don't our young Turks importune us to tell it "like it is.")

ED 002 391

The core trouble, of course, is that the idea won't expire; it persists like a toothache in the literature. The men in the beer-and-ivory serenity of the graduate schools, unplagued except by rioting students and scurrying recruiters, keep flaunting that goal before us as an unfinished, abandoned task. And at every conference and convention there is some damn fool on the program imploring you to relinquish your evil ways and come into grace. It is time, thunders the damn fool, to stop being the shuttlecock of educational circumstances and start playing the battledore of significant instructional action.

Well, that unenviable, but inevitable part is mine to play today--I am to be the dman fool who is to tell you why you must become an instructional leader, if you wish to continue to have any teling impact whatsoever on your school community. Furthermore, it is to be my task to instruct you in just how you go about becoming that type of reagent, (though the preferred nomemclature today is change agent.) I shall be honest; it is a task I relish, for I enjoy shouting salvation. And in the new secondary schools in the offing--and new is what they are going to be in every startling aspect--you and I either will be instructional leaders, or we shall fossilize into ineffectuality. But fortunately, there is just too much eogism implanted in any principal for him to be content to expire like the dinosaurs.

Now to bring this nonsense of mine into sharper focus, let me state three fundamental assumptions that undergird my thinking. First, no effective school can subsist without some significant instructional leadership being exercised by somebody--be it the principal, his secretary, the shop steward, the grumble-grumble lounge group of teachers, a wayward committee, the vested interests in school or out, or the big-brother computer. The basic decisions concerning the educational program of the school are being made somewhere, somehow.

Second, it is not just professional chauvinism that leads me to claim that the principal is placed in the most strategic station to consummately shape and form the instructional program within the school. He doesn't have all the answers, nor should he even be raising all the questions, but his is the implicit power behind the chalkboard.

And, third, the principal can and must grasp that leadership in his own strong hands, nettles or no. The barriers may be formidable, but the principal can overcome them. In the final analysis, any principal is a self-made schoolman. He can be what he wants to be, and he can do what he wants to do. The limitations don't lie in the post; they lie within us.

Not that all the principal needs do is to take the vow, doff his hat, and assume the dignity. Becoming and being an instructional leader is a far more complex, exacting operation. That, of course, is to be the burden of the remainder of my remarks this long afternoon--just what it means to wield instructional, or preferably educational, leadership and how one gets there. But from the outset it is vital to remember that the leadership role is implicit in our title as principal--principal teacher, principal educator, principal prime mover in the school. We really have little option.

WHAT IS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER?

Already I have enfiladed you with the term "instructional leader" a score

of times. It may do well now to look a little more closely at that concept, trying to spell out just what it is and what it isn't. Like all modish phrases in our profession, instructional leadership has come to mean different things to different people. One quick and not too cynical a definition would be that instructional leadership is doing precisely what one's colleague down the road isn't doing. The term has served as well as an umbrella for all those things the principal like to do, with the other jobs being left to wilt in the rain. Or the jargon may be thrown up as a camouflage to cover some deep confusion in one's own thinking, casting the glamor of a bright counter phrase over some glaring professional insufficiencies.

But in reality the concept of instructional leadership is quite self-evident; there can be little that is arcane about giving leadership to the instructional program, despite the fact that the concept is just now bursting on the azimuth of the principal with startling abruptness. Simply offering a definition, however, is quite inutile. The implications of the concept, especially as they work their way into the day-by-day existence of the principal, should be our prime concern. A brief, overview of these implications thus may prove helpful:

1. <u>The instructional part of the term is paramount</u>. It is too easy for educators to forget that the purpose of the school is to forward the learning of the child. Just as there can be no teaching without some correlative learning, neither does any administrative action have validity apart from its direct impact on the instructional program in the school. Instruction here, of course, is being used broadly, comprehensively to encompass program, schedule, curriculum, philosophy, quality of teaching, assessment of student progress, reaearch, as well as vis-a-vis contacts with students and teachers.

2. <u>The leadership to be exerted is not that of status or station, but of the actual situation</u>. The principal is an instructional leader, not because of the Board of Education has so annointed him, or the superintendent so appointed him, but because in this instructional situation and that, he is able to bring his knowledge and understanding, his energies and his insights to bear positively on an educational problem of central importance to the school. Instructional leadership is not a matter of fiat or of mandate. It is a matter of being able to give positive direction to a situation at a given point because of superior knowledge and technique, a superiority that is recognized, not proclaimed. This implies that at times the principal will be compelled to forego the leadership role, relinquishing it to others better prepared than he to cope with and control the specific problem. Indeed, his very capability of subordinating his rank to the requsrements of the situation in itself is a mark of his leadership.

3. <u>This leadership is not imposed on people</u>. It does not manipulate them; to the contrary, it works <u>with</u> people to assist them in clarifying their own goals and in attaining those mutually determined and desired ends. Leadership is quite congruous with group action. Indeed, in schools imbedded in a democratic matrix, leadership must be a function of group aspirations and action, or it pollutes its own purposes. I am not suggesting that schools--or any other important endeavor undertaken communally--should be or can be conducted compulsively by committee vote. Certainly neither a majority decision nor consensus--that most horrendous of all group dynamic beasts--can resolve the tensions generated by an ongoing school program. Constructive action nearly always requires individual effort. Yet everyone engaged in the enterprise must be given scope for voice, opinion and dialogue. Leadership emerges in articulating and implementing the needs and directions of the group.

I have already observed that actual leadership does not always coincide with vested rank and authority. Need I belabor this point with you gentlemen who know only so well that frequently sage counsel prevails in parade dress in the front office but aborts in the staff lounge under the verbal assault of some of the giants of faculty dissidence?

4. Instructional leadership is inherently a cluster of intents and actions, as well as a complex of intenders and actors. Instructional leadership is not one man assuming a prescribed, clearly defined role. In fact it is precisely here that the principal who would fain be an instructional leader is so frequently hoisted by his own home-made nuclear bomb. For he misdeems his role as instructional leader to signify that he must provide all the educational leadership within his school. He perches himself on a lonely, isolated crag of self-styled leadership, then wonders distractedly why the entire school falls higgeldy-piggeldy about his head.

Lloyd Trump has given us a helpful construct with which to approach the operations of the principal within the school by referring to the principalship,[1] rather than lingering on the principal. This principalship is the aggregate of those administrative and executive functions centering in the principal's office. An entire administrative cadre may--and in most cases must--undertake them, not just one man. We can apply the same model to instructional leadership, holding it to be totality of those tasks converging on the instructional (teaching/learning) elements and their configuration within the school. The principal's major responsibility as an instructional leader is really to bring into concert the divergent efforts of all the many people within the school who share this instructional leadership. Without the principal's subtle, but unyielding direction, these efforts would become woefully diffuse. The principal's job, to pirate the apt phrase of Fred Wilhelm's, is to read some coherence into the diversity that is the school house.[2] And this is a creativity of high order.

With this understanding illuminating the concept of instructional leadership, it becomes apparent that the principal's first task must be to develop the structure wherein that leadership can function to help forward the prime educational objectives of the school itself. All the loving care and fulsome solicitude that an earlier generation of principals poured into promulgating teacher handbooks, and choreographing routines, thus setting up the administrative/managerial framework of the school, will now have to be deflected into erecting that staff organization needed to bring instruction and curriculum development in the school to the fore. Our schools will be the better for it.

5. Instructional leadership is being exercised by somebody in the school at all times, here and now, yesterday and tomorrow. Daily decisions are being taken, or seized by default, that have a profoundly formative impact on the school, its program, the students, and the staff. You forget at the peril of reality that inaction itself has clearly discernible consequences; it can be as loudly eloquent as a "pass" bid in bridge. If the principal today is not sharing fully in this instructional leadership, he can be well assured that others are pre-empting the role he has forfeited. It may be his own unassuming but perspicacious assistant; it may be some line or staff proconsul at the district office level; it may be an alert committee of committed or Black Jolly Roger teachers, filling the vacuum; it may be the most raucous voice in the staff lounge; it may even be a

small cabal of parents--with much embonpoint--having ingress to the board and a heavy bludgeon behind their pleasantness. But no matter who the prime mover may be, somehow the fundamental instructional decisions are being made, for good or illih. That these core decisions are professional ones, and should be made by educators in some kind of conjoint enterprise, seems evident to me. That the principal must feel that he can provide the most incisive leadership to such a staff effort may be an essary in arrogance, but it is an arrogance that justifies any pretension we have to the principalship in the first place.

Be not self-deceived! The most important activity afoot in your school or mine is the instructional program itself, capturing, as it does the kids, the teachers, and the community in its train. As principal your option today is a simple one. In stark terms it is whether you will rise to the exigent challenge of being an instructional leader or whether you will subside to the vapidities of being an office boy, irrespective of the glitter of whatever title you may salvage from the debacle.

6. No principal is, can be, or should be expected to be a Renaissance man. At the farthest we are moderately trained generalists. At worst--and this sweeps up most of us--we probably are not quite the dullards our blatant critics would have us believe. In wrapping himself in the mantle of the instructional leader, the principal is making no bombastic claim to being the magister of all disciplines and the high master of all crafts. To exercise any sort of leadership, each of us must first acknowledge his own clearly demarked limitations, both to himself and to others. The principal cannot pretend to specialist status in all--or in many--fields. It is quite otherwise; if he has any trained and tutored strength it must be precisely in helping other people achieve those worthwhile purposes they now hold only dimly and uncertainly in view. He must know how to unlock leadership qualities, as behaviors not glittering attributes, in others, so that they and the school can move towards self-actualization. The principal must be able to resolve differences, explore common grounds, take preventive action when impasse threatens, trace out consequences, then finally muster resources for the tasks agreed upon and identified. He must be able to help people unddrstand and arrive at priority decisions, help them test their thinking with the acid of the philosophy the school espouses, help the group effect its will once it has been delineated.

Now these slight attributes may seem to be all the equipment the principal requires to operate boldly and well as an instructional leader. There are two other qualities he must possess, however, even prior to these interpersonal skills. First, he must hold the individual student central in his thinking at all times. The most exquisitely contrived system designed to bring about instructional change and progress in a school is a hollow fraud if the kid himself is lost in the process. Instructional leadership can have only one direction, towards greater maturity, greater flexibility, greater educational freedom and independence for the student. If its chief objective is simply a better institutionalization of the schooling process, then the principal's leadership and the school itself both will have missed the mark.

Second, the principal needs to read and to read and to read, not only in the wildly proliferating realm of educational literature, but in the wider libraries of science and sociology and history and psychology and

art and the humanities and all the other wonderful relms of the mind. (Perhaps even a little pornography at times, to remind him that both he and his students are all too human, might not be too amiss.) This reading is not to arm him to grapple on even footing with teachers, each in his own discipline, but to alert the principal to the broad currents aswirl in our society today, currents that are sweeping over the schools, immersing the students, forming the intellectual coastlines of tomorrow.

Now this reading stint is no easy task, not for those of us who must red-letter those days when we have been successful in wedging an entire ten minutes from the hurly-burly of events just to read the memos blowing across our desks. Nevertheless, that time we must somehow find. But on this matter of quicksilver time in the horny hands of the principal I shall have something more to say later.

Now there isn't a principal in front of me at this point who isn't demurring, saying heatedly to himself that certainly he possesses all these skills in bumper amounts, that his concern has always courted the individual student, and that read he does, albeit probably in the shower of a morning. If these are the indices of the instructional leader, then you have been reading prose all your life, unbenownst to you. I can't disagree, but I can suggest that the only difference--and it is a lethal one--between what you are doing at the present--and doing well-and what you would be doing were you a self-elevated instructional leader is precisely where and to what degree you are placing your emphasis. Most of us today are administering schools--operating them--managing them--directing them--keeping them--but not creating them. The harsh fact that a new administrative position within the school has come to the fore within the last decade--and come with vehemence--bolsters my contention. That position, of course, is the coordinator for curriculum and instruction, whether he operates as an assistant principal within the building or an assistant superintendent at the central office level.

To borrow a little from Japanese history, by housing these coordinators, we are fatuously inviting shoguns into our own palaces. That lesson of Nippon should be spelled out carefully, for when the emperor forwent the prime justification for his authority, he cast away his impire. Who is really fashioning the shape of the school where it moulds the young student, the assistant principal whose full-time assignment lies in instruction or the principal bumblingly and self-importantly busying himself with keeping the bells gonging on time and the surplus kids out of the corridors? The question is not quite rhetorical.

HOW TO BE AND BECOME AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

Now Tommy Tompkins is a machiavellian, devious soul. When he asked me to speak at this session, I unguardedly thought that all I would have to do would be to maunder on at length about the principal as instructional leader, drawing a little bit upon philosophy, much upon flatulence, and prose away the hour. Then I was pointedly instructed that some pragmatic considerations were expected, that I also was to address myself to how to be and how to become a leader of instruction, should Eden still be unvisited in your school. Hence, we yet have quite a road to traverse together before that afternoon schnapps. At least my words of unadulterated wisdom should raise a timely thirst within you.

As fellows of the craft, you do not require me to detail for you all the many erosions that waste away the fine resolutions and grim determinations of each of us, hour by hour and day by day. In my distempered viewpoint, no other person caught in this nexus of education is so much at the mercy of other people at all times and under all circumstances as is the principal of the secondary school. His professional life truly is a quandry transfixed on the horns of a dilemma, bogged down in a guagmire. He is father confessor one moment, and Lord High Executioner the next. He is the detested establishment the third moment, and hail, our hearty leader the fourth. He eats anxiety for breakfast, disdain for lunch, and disaster for dinner. His superintendent thinks he is deep in conspiracy with the teachers, the staff hold him the liveried lackey of the central office, and the students stick pins into his effigy figure. Naive parents, of course, expect him to ransom their children and mid-wife bright justice into the world of learning.

I hope you can discern the iron edge beneath this heavy-handed humor. The principal's lot is not a pleasant one; still it is the one you and I have chosen. We must stolidly accept the fact that whatever we attempt to do must be carried out in those narrow interstices between crises that find their way with such dismaying regularity to our office doors. But though it may take homeric efforts (and isn't this the present standard for all of us as it is?), it yet is quite possible to carry out instructional leadership even under the distressing circumstances in which we strive to survive. For, I insist, the principal can be master of those circumstances, if only he takes the thought. While the principal may not be able to call upon that steam-shovel faith that will move mountains, at least he can lock doors and open windows. That in itself is the first step towards a retrieval of sanity and the beginning of instructional leadership.

But realistically, what must a principal do to free himself from the quicksand of details and to structure his school so he can carry out those imperative tasks that speak so directly to his professional raison d'estre? There is no simple prescription at hand, but I do believe the necessary preconditions for instructional leadership can be identified. To me these are:

1. The principal must affirm in his own mind the primacy of this role among all the diverse personnae he is called upon to be as titular and functioning head of the school. Unless the principal passionately believe instructional leadership is his essential calling, inevitably he will jettison those duties when the wind rises and the seas heave--a situation that betides almost daily in any principal's office. The principal himself must be stubbornly convinced that his educational obligations take precedence over his managerial responsibilities. Even a principal places first things first, but he first must determine that priority.

2. Having firmly committed himself to instructional leadership, the principal then must discuss its sweeping implications and broad consequences with his superintendent. Unless an explicit concurrence can be achieved between the principal and his boss, the possibilities of his effective leadership in the realm of instruction

and curriculum development will remain pathetically remote. In the final analysis, the building principal simply fleshes out the educational expectations of the superintendent within the school. As principals, we have had to learn how to wage successful guerrila warfare with many of the forces beating down upon the schools, turning and blunting their thrust by attrition, by forlorn stands, by sinuous resistance. The one person, however, whom we cannot fight, and must not counter, is the superintendent. If basic disagreement subsists between the principal and the superintendent, then the principal really can't be any kind of leader, instructional or otherwise, within that school setting.

The important thing is to probe through with the superintendent the operational meanings of instructional leadership. It is not sufficient that the chief school office merely subscribes to the eloquent phrase itself. He must understand--at the gut level to use an inelegant, but visceral phrase--that by taking on this major set of obligations the principal is rendering himself personally unabailable for direct engagement in many other aspects of the management of the school. If your superintendent deludes himself into believing the principal can be involved in the supervision of instruction, in the improvement of program, and in the general forwarding of education, while at the same time indenturing himself with basic school housekeeping, then both he and his principal are headed for bleak disaster. Something has to give when the principal becomes instructional leader, no matter how split--or divisible--his personality may be. What should give, in my opinion, is the hegemony of management considerations over the educational welfare of the school.

3. With the superintendent's muttered blessings in his pocket, the principal then must reorganize the administrative structure of the school. His dual aim here is to permit effective instructional leadership on his part and to foster a staff-wide concern with instruction itself. This requires the establishment of two overlapping, yet coordinated systems of governance in the school. The first--the managerial or caretaking apparatus--is to be charged with the day-by-night operation of the school. The wide range of operational responsibilities--from student accounting to discipline and control--will fall within the purview of these people who will be staff assistants deliberately chosen for their competence in limited areas of school management. While basic directions concerning their theatres of action will be determined by the principal and the staff, plenary authority and responsibility for carrying out these policies and procedures is to be invested in these assistants. Each in his own province will have the final word. Unless sheer incompetence or egregrious use of power is charged, it will be expected that few if any unruly matters will escape from their hands to levy toll on the zealously guarded time of the principal himself.

The major areas of responsibility to be so delegated are student control, student activities, public relations, plant operation, and general administrative details. If you recognize these old foes as precisely those camp-followers that have encroached so outrageously on your own energies, filling your days with dry dismay and your nights with parched disgust, the resemblance is not coincidental. The actual number of staff assistants will hinge on the size of the school, ranging from one to half a dozen--the latter for those Cyclopean monsters now disguising themselves as large high schools.

The other division will be responsible for the improvement of the instructional program of the school; it will comprise the administrative apparatus zeroing in on the processes of education themselves. This will be headed by the principal in presence and action--not in sedulous absentia as is now so frequently the sorry case. Again depending on the size of the school, beneath the principal there may be one, two, or more assistant principals, men whose interests and concerns and assignments lie directly with the improvement of instruction. These will be the principal writ small, each an incubating principal in his own right.

Supportive of the curricular efforts of the principal and these assistants will be the department heads, personnel again selected not for mustard-seed ability to take accurate inventories not to keep on the slippery trail of strayed supplies, but teachers singled out for their commitment to and understanding of the educational program and aspirations afoot in their departments. In larger departments, a department assistant may be assigned as well, correlative to the staff assistants noted above, to handle the housekeeping chores within the department, thus liberating the department head for his fuller and more productive involvement in program development.

Undergirding all these efforts, will be the working teachers, those people who actually are engendering whatever program and education and effective instruction are abroad in the school. It will be well to remind yourself time and anon that the only justification for this dual structure of administration within the school is to accord the principal and his co-adjutors time and opportunity to consort with teachers in vis-a-vis colloquies on this core matter of education itself. For the instructional leadership the principal should be essaying is not leadership over teachers or even through them, but with them. Its end goal must be the clarification of ends and the mobilization of means to yoke schooling and education a little more closely for the kids here and now. The richest educational resource found in any school is the teachers themselves. As instructional leader, the principal must focus the diverse efforts of these teachers on the single student, must somehow release the professional imaginations of the teachers so the school may thrive, must put roller skates on the ideas of the teachers so education itself can move forward.

Staff committees will abound and pullulate, inevitable. A school curriculum cabinet becomes imperative, as does a counterpart student curriculum committee. Other staff committees, runing the gamut from time-to-teach to democratic practices, will appear. The principal and/or an assistant principal will be an ex officio, but a freely talking, member of each of these staff groups.

And how will one obviate the customary aversion of teachers to committees and meetings and endless palaver? Well, when committees speak directly to the teaching-learning process within the school and when decisions that are meaningful can be taken, it is incredible how teachers are willing, even eager, to expend time and contribute ideas. Not, mind you, that utter beatitude will have been reached, but at least an educational dialogue will have been triggered. And if you are so cynical as to think that most teachers are not willing to engage in a robust, significant discourse about the work they are doing, then you are of little faith--and you probably should apply for the Business Manager's job in the district.

Through such a dual administrative structure, it should be quite possible to have school keep well, while at the same time returning the principal to his rightful station as the principal educator within that building.

At first blush, I grant you, this blueprint seems to call for an inordinate increase in administrative personnel, but appearances are deceptive. Actually, these are tasks that to a considerable degree are presently being carried forward in most schools, whether the principal is consciously alert to the fact or not. What this model envisages is a reallocation of duties, a transfer of responsibilities, an alteration in a few name plates. It is the retrieval by the principal of essential duties back into his own hands, along with a shifting to others of grubby matters that have pre-empted his time and his professional talents hithertofore. It is simply a restructuring of the school. In those cases where administrative manpower has been sufficient for the job being done, these changes probably would not entail more non-teaching staff. But obviously in a school where the administrative corps has been hopelessly shorthanded across the years, no productive realignment would be possible without a healthy infusion of additional administrative folk. However, in such a case, the principal presently cannot be functioning in any effective capacity. He must be simply breaking his breath and schorching his eyebrows in a frantic effort to put out brush fires throughout the school.

What is needed in this permutation of administrative pieces into a different, more desirable, mosaic, is that the principal view the principalship as a complex of functions, rather than merely as an extension of his own self or the lengthened shadow of his own office. I hammered at this odea earlier in this address, but I should like to give it reiterated stress here. As long as we continue to consider the principal physically and professionally synonomous with the principalship, we are dooming ourselves to ineffectuality. No man, even in the most lilliputian school, can hope to carry out all these multifarious duties alone. He must divide the jobs--and willingly part his authority--with many other people. The quality of the principal is tested precisely by how wisely and cannily he parcels out those jobs, piling strngths on strengths, while shrewdly compensating for evident weaknesses, his own and others. Still, it may be a little disconcerting to recall that while the principal is not the principalship, he will and must be held accountable for its over-all efficiency. His own professional worth is appraised in terms of the total effects of that principalship.

To spike your heavy cannons in advance, let me assure you that this model of the principalship organized for educational growth is not simply a heady flight into fantasy on my part. There are some few scattered schools and principals around this country who already have reached or even thrust beyond this point. There are many others that are moving stoutly in this direction. Nor should this be surprising, since the "Mene, Mene, Tekel" on the office bulletin board is vivid for all who run, either frightenedly or determinedly, to read. The days of occupying ourselves with petty decisions and minor league tyrannies are rapidly fleeting by. If the building principal is to carve out a significant place for himself in the schools of tomorrow (and that means circa 1968, mind you), it will be and must be precisely in this area of instructional improvement and program development. Otherwise, lads, we shall continue simply as small-type contract readers and staff grievance routers--figures well suited to

be hung and derided in effigy in any Staff Lounge.

Before leaving this point, I wish to give full credit to Lloyd Trump for so much of the original labor done on this broad concept of the principalship. His proposal for such a bifid administrative structure within the school was released at our last national convention.(3) In that paper, Dr. Trump triangulated those administrative patterns he discerned emerging from the future, if and when the principal vindicates his claim to being an instructional leader. That paper of his, by the bye, should be given wide and noisy currency in our profession, for it not only offers the hope that this instructional leadership is possible, but it even dares presuppose that it is quite probable. Among the clustered provocative ideas in his statement, there is one that every working principal will note with quizzical delight. Lloyd Trump flatly asserts that the principal should not labor on or off the job more than 55 hours per week. If he does, asserts Lloyd, he is cheating both himself and his school. Now there's a Paradise to be regained, is it not?

4. But to return, after this long detour, to our task of retooling the principal for educational leadership, after clearing his school and his office for this instructional action, he then must schedule himself with inviolate rigor for those things that are fundamental and indispensible to that role. Classroom observation, staff committee sessions, departmental pourparlers, individual conferences with teachers and students concerning instructional affairs, attendance at educational talkfeasts, participation in district curriculum meetings, these are the items that will now bespatter his calendar. And he must keep close faith with that calendar. This signifies that when an irate parent wolfishly descends on the school, baying to see the principal forthwith, he just isn't given that ingress. It means that when an aggrieved teacher wants an immediate room change, he doesn't jump-claim on the principal's time with that delegatable request. It suggests that even the superintendent may have to queue up for awhile, as more momentous affairs go forward in the principal's office.

5. The principal will have to block out large segments of time for reading and writing. Yes, heresy that it may seem, the principal will do much of this right on the job--baldfacedly in his own office without closing the doors or pulling the blinds. Furthermore, his answer to the assinine, obtrusive query, "I hope I am not interrupting you!" will be a forthright and disgusted eructation. There are few other things that the principal can do or should do that are of more potential value to the school and its program than just drenching himself in the literature. And he must put pen to paper, not so much to megaphone his ideas abroad, but simply to order them. Writing, you may know, is an isotropic form of thinking. As principals we must tutor ourselves anew in how to think--acknowledging that this requires a wealth of time and a richness of serenity not usually resident in the principal's office. Ergo, we must take that time from less seminal duties; we must create that serenity by chasing chaos from the office.

6. Lastly, the principal who has been newly dubbed as instructional leader must make the meaning and implication of that role crystal-clear to everyone, in achool and out. It is imperative that the staff as a whole be led to understand what the principal is now trying to accomplish. Moreover, the teachers must comprehend the new constraints and limitations the principal

operates under as instructional leader. They must realize that an open-door policy in relation to the principal's office is now about as reasonable as removing the doors from the johns. The Staff must accept the fact that when and where a responsibility has been delegated, the assistant's decision, unless insupportably arbitrary, is to be considered binding. Our hotly militant teachers must grasp the reality that as more and more control of working circumstances fall into their own hands, the principal's position within the school complex is transmuting from that of a foreman to one of authentic leadership. That this sea-change will return the basic concern in the school to where the action is, in the classroom itself, should certainly make this transcendence of roles highly palatable to the teachers. The principal becomes an active, supportive factor, for the teaching/learning within the school, not just the slightly bemused autocrat behind the office counter, charily dispensing paper clips and counsel.

This same realization of the sharply defined limitations in which the principal now is to work must be fostered among the students, the parents, the community, the central office staff. Special concern must be taken to spell out clearly and unambiguously for the principal's own assistants--both staff and instructional--the extent, the import, the nature of their several assignments. The fact that the staff assistant is a terminal and specialist career post, while the line of promotion and instructional authority within the school threads from the department head, through the instructional assistant, to the principal must be driven home unequiocally.

And, of course, the better part of valor will require that it be explained most tactfully to the principal's wife that she now can expect to have her husband home and in dishabille far more frequently than ever before. For many such job-bereaved wives, this will be like acquiring a new husband. It just may be that not all the ladies will relish such a drastic change.

AN AUTHENTIC ROLE--BUT A POSSIBLE ONE?

This then, is how the principal becomes an instructional leader, how he battens down his school and organizes his staff for the task. But just how realistic is all this? Is this a role any principal actually can fulfill in our schizoid profession of secondary school administration? Or is this the stuff that dreams and discharged principals are made of?

Manifestly I think it is desirable, practicable, feasible, but I may be feeding my own illusions. I must confess that instructional leadership is not a common practice among the principals in the secondary schools of the country. Nor does it seem realistic to many of them, congenial though the idea may be to their own intellectual predispositions. The responses I obtained in a recent--and highly informal--opinion survey of some of my colleagues along the chthonian banks of Lake Erie were most cautionary. Brushing aside the Ropers and the Gallups and the USOE people and the National Assessors, I asked the simple question--Is it possible for a principal to be an instructional leader in today's school setting? My brothers-in-anxiety responded:

> Principal A, honestly puzzled: "Instructional leadership? What in blazes is that?" The moral: You can't become what you don't know. For many principals in the field, the very concept is unfamiliar and obscure.

Principal B, guffawing: "Only by beating a hasty retreat to the university. You're in a public school, boy."

The moral: To many of us principals, education is something quite apart from what does on in our schools. If you want to be an educator, don't become a principal.

Principal C, harried and harrassed: "Not with my hard-nosed superintendent, my interferring board, my tight-fisted public, my insurrectionary staff. I'd be tarred and feathered, lampooned and sacked forthwith."

The moral: It takes courage to be courageous. There are some jobs a man should be fired from simply as a matter of self-respect.

Principal D, hedging cautiously, "It sounds like a good idea, doesn't it? But there are so many pressures on all of us now. I just don't think it would work because--" and then he itemized all the pitfalls in the way, and the list was lengthy.

The moral: We can always cite a score of unrebuttable reasons for not doing something we had no intention of doing in the first place.

Principal E, practical and earnest: "Hire yourself another assistant principal, John, and let him take care of supervision and all that jazz. Your job is to coordinate, not to instigate."

The moral: It is easy to delegate away the very marrow of one's responsibilities.

My last principal, pensively mused: "It's a lovely dream, and the times, they are changing. You're perfectly right. The principal should be and must be the prime instructional leader in his school. Let's go out and do it today."

The moral: This man was the highly respected ean of all the principals in the area. Unfortunately, he retired five years ago.

But this is too flippant a manner in which to answer the legitimate objections that can be raised to the efforts of the principal to become an instructional leader. There are frowning and forbidding obstacles, albeit perhaps they are not quite as insuperable as our lurid imaginations would paint them. In the few surviving minutes of my address, I should like to briefly examine the more unwieldly of those problems with you, hopefully finding an exit here and there from the impasse.

1. <u>This rising surge of teacher militancy</u>. The lament goes that teachers are intransigent, indeed hot as Huns these days of direct action. They are illdisposed to accept any overt leadership from the principal, instructional or otherwise, determined as they are to be master in their own school, with the principal the fetch-and-carry lad.

Well, this just isn't true. Militant, teachers may be, and probably must be, but they still are professionals. They still are deeply concerned about the quality of their work, even though they now aspire to eat a little higher on the hog. Indeed, it well may be

precisely this new and strident independent of teachers that will drive us to instructional leadership. As the hierarchical pyramid of status authority within the school teeters, teachers may permit us to remain at our stations only on the pain of proved professional competence in instructional leadership. We shall be educators, or nothing.

2. Professional negotations mutilating and eroding our prerogatives. This is akin to the first objection. But again, as many of our customary powers are bargained away, we can righteously and rightfully hold the line on one--the final responsibility for the quality of the educational program and process within the building. We need not waver here. I have a strong feeling that professional negotiations might propel us all, willy-nilly and topsy-turvey, into new relationships with the teachers. Any snippet clerk can read a contract. It will still take an educator, and the principal one at that, to direct the educational program within the school.

3. Insufficient time to do the job, well or otherwise. Where will the principal find the time for this luxury of instructional leadership, for its demands are insatiable? Even with the finest organization conceivable and with hordes of superior assistants, the principal still remains the whirligig of time. Everybody and every problem seems to beat their way to his office door. But as I have noted above, there is one solution: First and primarily do those things that speak to the instructional program of the school, delaying and deferring other matters. That is, first and foremost be the instructional leader. When you do, you will not have time left for those other seven-year locust matters that so greedily devour the substance of a principal. The clamor of frustrated parents and students and teachers may shatter the heavens more raucously than a sonic boom, but you will be fulfilling the terms of the principalship more completely than ever before. Of course, your yearly spring sport may be flying about the country, applying to superintendents and being interviewed by boards, but it is fun seeking a new post, is it not?

4. The arrogation of authority from outside the building. The bureaucracy in our school districts is proliferating; hence more and more fundamental decisions are being made in the central office. As curricular and supervisory personnel are added at that level, almost imperceptibly the reins of instructional leadership are being removed from the hands of the principal and being seized by this assistant superintendent or that coordinator.

Now this is not to be denied, but the fault lies within ourselves, dear Horatio, and not with the avid beauracrats. We have fought neither jealously nor well for those very rights now in jeopardy. To the contrary, we have been secretly relieved to get them out from underfoot. Yet for the well-being of the school, it is vital that the pivotal educational decisions be made directly on the site, and not at some Kaffkaesque remove. If we principals permit this erosion of our professional autonomy to continue, then we merit our lumps. Fortunately, our own scowling teachers will be our best allies here, for they are stubbornly reversing the trend, demanding that decisions affecting them and their students and their school be made right on location, along with and by them.

5. Social upheavals which threaten the very existence of the school. The school is slowly being pulverized by bitterly contending social demands; in consequence, the principal must spend his time and sacrifice himself just trying to hold the school together.

But this is exactly the intent of educational leadership--to hold the school together by abetting and promoting its most important mission, that of education. Few of us would deny that society is imposing intractable, even self-cancelling, requirements on its public schools. The schools are being called upon to redress ills founded of old. As educators we are being asked--no, demanded--to make education perform miracles. We may blanch from the task, but again as educators we must either believe in the thaumaturgic strength of education or we must confess to being mountebanks of the first water. Education can serve our society--perhaps even preserve it--though our schools seem unable to do much of anything in their present posture.

Even in these parlous days we don't need a sociologist or a psychologist or a computer programmer in the school's front office. What we need is an instructional leader, for only such a principal can bring education and the school together once again into a working symbiosis. If our schools today are becoming increasingly irrelevant to the dynamic society in the making, it is up to us, gentlemen, and principals all, to reverse that disastrous current.

Now I have some robust articles of faith about this job you and I struggle to perform with some semblance of dignity, some degree of effectiveness, some rags of comfort. These beliefs, which at least keep the hobgoblins away in the sleepless hours of the night,are:

1. The building principal is the most important person in the entire school complex in determining the overall quality of the school. His powers are stringently, perhaps rightfully, limited, but his responsibilities aren't. The school indeed reflects the man.

2. The only honest role left the principal, if he still aspires to the honorific of educator, is to be an instructional leader. Someone else in the school can always tidy up the busy work he has been doing, but only the principal can exercise prime leadership.

3. As instructional leader, the principal will work harder even than he does today, but the work will be worth of the man.

4. Whether you or I personally will be able to meet the challenges of the times and endure is an open question. What is not questionable is that five--ten--twenty years from now there will be strong men occupying the principal's offices. These men will be instructional leaders pure and simple. And the schools themselves will be vigorous instruments in that constant remaking of society which now is mankind's endless task.

So this I believe! I always find the words of Harvard men plangent, especially when they follow the biases of my own thought. Dr. Joseph H. Cronin in a recent article in the Phi Delta Kappan captured in a paragraph precisely what I have strung out this last hour.(4) He wrote:

"The school principalship in America approaches a cloverleaf. Either it veers sharply to turn towards 'instructional leadership' or it hurtles further onward toward the role of building manager. In the latter role, the principal will 'waste away' to that of a master technician whose presence by teachers simply will be tolerated as the man in charge of keys, custodians, and kids in trouble. Indeed, more than a few principals have finished this journey. Let us call them 'caretakers,' for theirs is the function of caring about all the little things that take place in the school building. The big issues are left to the teachers, or left unsolved."

Need I urge you to get in the right lane, brother, or you just may end up?

. . . . . .

You have been kind to listen to a fellow practitioner rant on so long, and so outrageously, for who is less a prophet than one's own compeer? Certainly if there is one thing we principals have in common--piano movers and instructional leaders alike--it is this incurable proclivity for telling all and sundry what to do and where to go. Perhaps I should go there myself at this point.

Thank you.